

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system to match a consumer of health care services to a health care service provider over a communications network, the system comprising:

at least one computer terminal associated with the consumer for allowing the consumer access to the communications network;

a network server coupled to the communications network, the server comprising a computer program having:

a service provider data base identifying a plurality of health care service providers and associated health care service products offered by the service providers;

a first methodology for determining an appropriate treatment based on a diagnosis provided by the consumer or determined by an alternative diagnosis determiner; and

a second methodology for determining at least one appropriate service provider based on a treatment preference comprising at least one of geographical location of the provider, insurance plan participation, cost, provider experience with the treatment and provider outcome with respect to the treatment.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the service provider data base comprises information related to a plurality of service providers, medical products offered by each provider, the provider's experience with each medical product, outcome of each provider with respect to each product, price for each product, description of each product and demographic location of each provider.

3. The system of claim 1, further wherein the first methodology determines the number of treatment options available for a particular treatment.

4. The system of claim 3, wherein the first methodology determines a selected treatment option if more than one treatment option is available.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the alternative diagnosis determiner comprises one of a link to a medical diagnosis database and a referral to a physician.

5 6. The system of claim 4, wherein the first methodology accesses the service provider database to describe the treatment option when more than one treatment option is available.

10 7. The system of claim 6, wherein the first methodology allows the consumer to obtain a referral to a physician to assist in understanding of treatment options.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein, after the consumer is matched to a service provider, an identification number is issued.

9. The system of claim 8, further comprising a link to the service provider.

15 10. The system of claim 1, further comprising a consumer data base obtained from the second methodology comprising information related to the consumer's choice of service provider.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein the consumer database is coupled to the service provider data base for updating the service provider data base.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein the second methodology has an input from the service provider data base to determine the at least one appropriate service provider.

5 13. The system of claim 1, wherein provider outcome includes an indication of consumer satisfaction.

14. The system of claim 1, further wherein the cost treatment preference includes the capability to offer a reduced cost for greater usage.

15. The system of claim 1, further comprising the capability to prioritize the treatment preferences in a selected order.

10 16. The system of claim 1, further comprising a program flow for charging the consumer a fee to participate in the system.

17. A method to match a consumer of health care services to a health care service provider over a communications network, the method comprising:

15 allowing the consumer to access the communications network to connect to a network server coupled to the communications network, the server comprising a computer program having a service provider data base identifying a plurality of health care service providers and associated health care service products offered by the service providers;

20 determining an appropriate treatment based on a diagnosis provided by the consumer or determined by an alternative diagnosis determiner; and

determining at least one appropriate service provider based on a treatment preference comprising at least one of geographical location of the provider, insurance

plan participation, cost, provider experience with the treatment and provider outcome with respect to the treatment.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the service provider data base comprises information related to a plurality of service providers, medical products offered by each provider, the provider's experience with each medical product, outcome of each provider with respect to each product, price for each product, description of each product and demographic location of each provider.

19. The method of claim 17, further wherein the first step of determining comprises determining the number of treatment options available for a particular treatment.

20. The method of claim 19, where the first step of determining determines a selected treatment if more than one treatment option is available.

21. The method of claim 17, wherein the alternative diagnosis determiner comprises one of a link to a medical diagnosis database and a referral to a physician.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the first step of determining comprises accessing the service provider database to describe the treatment option when more than one treatment option is available.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the first step of determining allows the consumer to obtain a referral to a physician to assist in understanding of treatment options.

24. The method of claim 17, further comprising, after the consumer is matched to a service provider, issuing an identification number.

25. The method of claim 24, further comprising providing a link to the service provider.

5 26. The method of claim 17, further comprising generating a consumer data base comprising information related to the consumer's choice of service provider.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the consumer database is coupled to the service provider data base for updating the service provider data base.

10 28. The method of claim 17, further comprising providing an input from the service provider data base to enable said second step of determining to determine the at least one appropriate service provider.

29. The method of claim 17, wherein provider outcome includes an indication of consumer satisfaction.

15 30. The method of claim 17, further wherein the cost treatment preference includes the capability to offer a reduced cost for greater usage.

31. The method of claim 17, further comprising the capability to prioritize the treatment preferences in a selected order.

32. The method of claim 17, further comprising charging the consumer a fee to participate.

33. A computer readable storage medium for a program for operating a system to match a consumer of health care services to a health care service provider over a communication network coupling at least one computer terminal associated with the consumer for allowing the consumer access to the computer network and a network server, the computer readable storage medium comprising a computer program comprising:

a service provider data base identifying a plurality of health care service providers and associated health care service products offered by the service providers;

a first methodology for determining an appropriate treatment based on a diagnosis provided by the consumer or determined by an alternative diagnosis determiner; and

a second methodology for determining at least one appropriate service provider based on a treatment preference comprising at least one of geographical location of the provider, insurance plan participation, cost, provider experience with the treatment and provider outcome with respect to the treatment.

34. The storage medium of claim 33, wherein the service provider data base comprises information related to a plurality of service providers, medical products offered by each provider, the provider's experience with each medical product, outcome of each provider with respect to each product, price for each product, description of each product and demographic location of each provider.

35. The storage medium of claim 33, further wherein the first methodology determines the number of treatment options available for a particular treatment.

5 36. The storage medium of claim 35, wherein the first methodology determines a selected treatment option if more than one treatment option is available.

37. The storage medium of claim 33, wherein the alternative diagnosis determiner comprises one of a link to a medical diagnosis database and a referral to a physician.

10 38. The storage medium of claim 36, wherein the first methodology accesses the service provider database to describe the treatment option when more than one treatment option is available.

39. The storage medium of claim 38, wherein the first methodology allows the consumer to obtain a referral to a physician to assist in understanding of treatment options.

15 40. The storage medium of claim 33, wherein, after the consumer is matched to a service provider, an identification number is issued.

41. The storage medium of claim 40, further comprising a link to the service provider.

42. The storage medium of claim 33, further comprising a consumer data base obtained from the second methodology comprising information related to the consumer's choice of service provider.

5 43. The storage medium of claim 42, wherein the consumer database is coupled to the service provider data base for updating the service provider data base.

44. The storage medium of claim 33, wherein the second methodology has an input form the service provider data base to determine the at least one appropriate service provider.

10 45. The storage medium of claim 33, wherein provider outcome includes an indication of consumer satisfaction.

46. The storage medium of claim 33, further wherein the cost treatment preference includes the capability to offer a reduced cost for greater usage.

47. The storage medium of claim 33, further comprising the capability to prioritize the treatment preferences in a selected order.

15 48. The storage medium of claim 33, further comprising a program flow for charging the consumer a fee to participate.